

ALL THIS AND BOOKS TOO

LIBRARIES

(city)

PAMPHLET

BY JANELL GREGG

THE shimmering pavilion sits not far from the edge of Lake Talbert. Moats and waterways bring the water up to its base; sparkling fountains throw their images on its golden walls.

Inside, the senses are bombarded by color, light, texture, activity. Plants and stairways flourish in profusion. Sculpture, paintings and macrame compete with brightly colored tiles, planters and carpets to attract the eye. Video tapes are running in one corner; children lounge on the floor listening to a story hour; a teenager heads downstairs with his musical instrument. The splashing of numerous fountains lays a rustling blanket overall.

Can this be a library?

Yes . . . and no. The Huntington Beach Library Information and Cultural Resource Center is a library, and more.

"THERE are so many more ways people get their information now that libraries have to be more than libraries if they're to survive," says Walter Johnson, director of the Huntington Beach center. "Books will be around for a long time," says Johnson, "but people learn most from visual experience and through hearing. We have to think of other media."

Hence the name, Huntington Beach Library, Information and Cultural Resources Center. It's a mouthful, but it accurately encompasses the sweeping concept the Huntington Beach city fathers and library people dreamed about in designing the \$5-million, 74,000-square-foot library complex opened this year.

"Information" (in the name) implies dissemination of information," comments Johnson. "We're more than just a warehouse."

"We wanted to be more than a staid library. We started from scratch, tried to forget what we know and concentrated on what a library should be. We encourage activity, dialogue, participation, involvement."

THE result is magnificent. The building, simply as a building, is a work of art. Los Angeles architect Dion Neutra has combined a variety of materials—wood, volcanic rock, stone, glass, water, cement, carpet, tile and plants—with an abundance of light, color and space to produce a building that is both utilitarian and aesthetically satisfying.

Within the building Neutra's skillful design breaks up space, patterns and

levels so that no two views are alike. The design promotes a feeling of spaciousness, an atmosphere that is at once comfortable and stimulating.

Says Neutra of his design concept, "We have by all technical means at our disposal allowed the park (Huntington Beach's 250-acre Central Park, developed at the same time as the library) to penetrate and flow through the new library structure with the greatest possible 'contact with nature.'"

"Quite contrary to the limitations imposed by most urban surroundings, this library site was originally chosen with a conviction that views, both near and far, should dictate the conceptual approach."

BUT as unique as the building is, what's going on inside of it is truly unusual. This is a "library" where people can go not just to get something, but to do something. This is a "library" which can truly be a resource and activity center for the community; a "library" not only where learning is stored, but where it takes place.

Recognizing the revolutionary impact of the electronic media on learning, Johnson and the Library Board, the Public Facilities Corporation, the Hun-

tington Beach City Council and others who had a hand in the planning wanted a center that would fully incorporate the latest equipment. In the same vein, library planners wanted to include the performing arts, exhibitions and participatory activities that are all part of the total cultural learning experience.

The result of their thinking is a library which offers a range of activities from the most passive to active participation. No longer does going to the library mean just sitting in a chair reading a book. At the Huntington Beach library one can view an art or science exhibit, rent a work of art, attend a local meeting or lecture, screen a film, practice singing, listen to the radio, attend a poetry reading, help with the children's annual Winnie-the-Pooh party, check out a microscope, find a job on the job board or even (someday soon) play ping pong or pool. Something for everyone? Well just about.

An important facet of the Huntington Beach philosophy has been the thought that the library center should not only serve but appeal to every age level. It is not just a place for students. Its efforts are not just geared to the dissemination of facts, but to "the enrichment of every life."

ENRICHMENT is a key word for the library center because it implies the

REFLECTED in the quiet waters of Lake Talbert, the Huntington Beach Library, Information and Cultural Resources Center was designed to make the most of the beauty of the surrounding park.





FOUR tiers of book stacks form the central core of the skillfully designed multi-level building. Skylights add natural lighting.

PHOTOS BY THOM JACOBS.

diversity of activity the center is designed to contain and promote. Not only are there the usual library services (supplemented by extended borrowing privileges through the Santiago Library System and the Libraries of Orange County Network and the reference department's access to the state-funded reference center, Southern California Answering Network), but Huntington Beach offers a number of special services.

For example, the Orange County Genealogical Society houses its collection in the Huntington Beach center. A Community Resource file contains the names of local specialists who can aid the library in searching for information

in their specialties. A paperback exchange operates with the three smaller branches of the Huntington Beach library. A bookstore run by the Friends of the Library offers bestsellers and art reproductions for rent.

The library's involvement with the community extends even further. The job board offers patrons a limited employment service. In addition, plans are being made for a community referral service to aid people in contacting the agencies and finding the services they need to help with personal or family problems.

In terms of equipment, the center has quite a range available for public



WALTER Johnson, library director, envisioned a library designed for involvement.



use: duplicating and stencil machines, typewriters and microfilm readers. On micro-fiche readers, including one which may be taken home, some 23,000 volumes are available.

On the more sophisticated electronic level, films, tapes, FM radio, cable TV and records are available. The media center within the library handles check-out of these items.

The entire library has been wired for video reception and FM stereo listening posts are located on all reading levels. A preview room is available for pre-screening films and motorized screens in larger rooms are open for group viewing. The film library, originally only 100

OUND-proof practice rooms provide space for group discussions, individual music sessions, viewing films or just about any activity that is less than "library quiet."

COLOR-coded book return bins pre-sort books according to an ingenious system: books are coded to the color of the carpet on the floor on which they are shelved.



A MULTITUDE of materials—rock, tile, carpets, foliage—contribute to the wealth of textures and colors enriching the interior. "Patio" furniture as well as comfortable "living room" chairs add to the relaxed environment.

CHILDREN are made especially welcome with a variety of educational/recreational activities. Conversation pit is open to video viewing, group story-telling, etc.



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films, has been expanded to 3000 through an agreement combining the film resources of the library and Huntington Beach schools, with the library serving as central depository.

Beyond even this equipment, the library has an ultra-modern light-pen computer check-out: a pen-like device run over the computer coded label on each book records the pertinent check-out information. The computer also handles overdue notices and picks out reserved books when they are returned.

For the future, Director Johnson hopes to see a telephonics or tape library system installed. Through this system a patron can call in to listen to coded tapes on a wide variety of subjects. Even more remote perhaps, but also a possibility, is the eventual use of data banks which will provide, on demand, computer print-outs of information on any number of topics.

THE concept of enrichment is further applied, beyond the electronic and special resources, by special programs and facilities. The children's resource center, for example, is designed to provide a conducive and stimulating learning environment, one which will encourage the child to explore his own interests as well as participating in group activities.

The conversation pit is designed for story-telling and the Balboa Room is available for pre-school and elementary groups. One outside patio has been reserved for the children's use and plans are being laid for a "tot lot" in front of the library building.

The individual child will have access to books, educational toys and multimedia materials aimed at self-directed exploration and discovery. Non-restrictive loan policies encourage the children to take home learning and recreational materials such as microscopes. On the other side of the coin, the children's resource center boasts a special collection for parents on "How To Parent," including materials on child-rearing, adoption, sibling rivalry and more.

For older youth, the Youth Activities Room, as yet unfinished, will provide space for a variety of activities from movies to dances, ping pong to pool. Refreshment facilities, a sound system (the room is sound-proofed) and a youth oriented wall mural will all add to the atmosphere and uses of this special room.

JOHNSON envisions the Youth Activities Room as a haven for older high school and possibly beginning college students, "depending on what works out." Open to both recreational and educational group activities, it is hoped this room will draw young people to the

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library as well as giving them a place to break during study periods.

Other areas in the building are also set aside for special uses. The Pacific Room, with a capacity of 280, is a multi-purpose room equipped with a motorized screen, cable TV capabilities, a kitchenette and room dividers. A clever design feature allows this room to be closed off from the main library with access from the outside, thus making it available for group use on Sundays when the library is closed.

Sound-proof practice rooms, a staff lounge and patio, administrative offices and a lower patio open for receptions and similar events are other features of this highly versatile building.

With all these special facilities and so much sophisticated equipment one is likely to forget the backbone of the library: books. Neutra's design has indeed made books, or rather the stacks, the core or spine of the library building.

THE two main library floors open on four floors of stacks, eight feet apart. This compact centralized arrangement saves approximately 30 per cent of the floor space that would otherwise be required. Each stack, with a capacity of 70,000 volumes, has books color-coded for quick filing in an ingenious fashion. Books are labeled with a colored marker matching the carpet color on that level. Similarly, book bins for book return are color-coded to aid librarians by roughly pre-sorting the books.

Director Johnson reports that the library now holds about 90,000 volumes, a figure he expects will rise to 120,000 by year end. The 41,000 card carriers (of Huntington Beach cards; though the library is available to holders of almost any Orange County library card) keep about 30,000 volumes in circulation—a figure Johnson feels is very healthy.

As much as the equipment and books serve the information and basic library functions, so the cultural aspects have not been ignored. For the time being, cultural activities are somewhat limited. Funds permitting, they will be greatly expanded in the future.

On any given day, open spaces in the library will be given over to art or science exhibits. Paintings adorn the walls, macrame hangs from the ceiling, sculpture stands both inside and outside the building. Currently (through November 29), the prestigious IBM Isaac Newton exhibit enhances the upper level lounge. Prior to this showing, this special exhibit had been shown only in museums and galleries. (Also running this month—November 7-21—will be a children's literature book fair, assembled in conjunction with Cal State Fullerton.)

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City's Name at Stake ...High Hand Decides

A full house? A flush? Three of a kind? Such a hand could have been responsible for the naming of Orange, California. In the early 1870's this infant town was initially called Richland, but had to be changed because another California town already had claim to the name. The founders, Andrew Glassell and Alfred B. Chapman, and two other men disagreed upon a replacement. A friendly poker game between them was to decide what name was to be used. Had a good hand turned sour, Orange might have been called Olive, Almond, or maybe even Lemon. A folk tale? Maybe, but it still reflects a rich local heritage we all share.

A blink of an eye, and a colorful past becomes but a memory. We at Town and Country Center have created for your shopping convenience, a relaxed, congenial atmosphere reminiscent of Orange County's earlier days. Trees and ivy grace the serene walk from shop to shop only to be interrupted by beautiful fountains. In an ever-speeding world, Town and Country offers you a relaxing place to slow down and enjoy what you do.



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